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ABSTRACT

Educational evaluation is ideally much broader than the examination of students' work at stipulated intervals. It addresses the selection of objectives, the methodology, the capability of management, the adequacy of data sources, the resources required, and even the alternative educational purposes that could be served. This study evaluates the objectives, methods, and results of the first three years of a curriculum development project that began to develop a new social studies curriculum for the first five or six grades of schooling in Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. The evaluation is part of the process of determining whether further support from Canadian sources should be made available to the project, after an initial three year period of financing by the Canadian International Development Agency, the University of Western Ontario, and McGill University. The evaluation of the project is concerned with three levels of assessment: (1) the management; (2) teacher capacity for autonomous development of their curricula; and (3) children's growth in desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In conclusion, the project was termed a success despite its practical and theoretical limitations. (BZ)

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# EVALUATING INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: COOPERATION AND SELF-RELIANCE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES OF PERU, COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA

by

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# EVALUATING INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT:

# COOPERATION AND SELF-RELIANCE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

# OF PERU, COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA

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## ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the objectives, methods and results of the first three years of a curriculum development project that began to develop a new social studies curriculum for the first five or six grades of schooling in Colombia, Peru and Venezuela. The evaluation is part of the process of determining whether further support from Canadian sources should be made available to the project, after an initial three year period of financing by The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), The University of Western Ontario, and McGill University. Very similar processes and questions are being undertaken by the Latin American partners in the venture: CODECAL in Bogota, La Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru, La Universidad Pedagogica Nacional (of Colombia), the Ministries of Education in Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, and a number of school authorities. Several other agencies (including UNESCO and the regional pacts of Andres Bello and Cartagena) were similarly interested in the evaluation, because they saw the project as a model with potential for other purposes, including its expansion without significant change to other nations. It is evident that some changes in the sponsors may occur without the project being terminated.

Undertaken in 1983, the project has so far required over $500,000 (U.S.) of which about one third came from CIDA, over $100,000 came from the University of Western Ontario (mostly in-kind) and the balance came from various Latin American sources (mostly in-kind). If the evaluations of in-kind donations of professional services are taken on a person day rather than a regular salary basis, the Latin American contribution is significantly larger than that from Canada.

## EVALUATING INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND SELF-RELIANCE IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES OF PERU, COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA

**Introduction.**

Educational evaluation is ideally much broader than the examination of students' work at stipulated intervals. It addresses the selection of objectives, the methods used, the capability of management, the adequacy of data sources, the resources required (such as time and money), and even the alternative educational purposes that could be served[1]. It focuses upon process as well as upon product. If the required process is not working, either radical changes or termination seem to be in order. More often, although the process is imperfect, minor (formative) adjustments may be sufficient. Evaluation takes place in many different ways by those involved with different aspects of the process.

This project involves the development of an international social studies curriculum for the first six grades of Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela, which was undertaken by educators from the three nations with some Canadian sponsorship. The evaluation of the project is concerned with three levels of assessment: (1) of the management; (2) of teacher capacity for autonomous development of their curricula; and (3) of children's growth in the desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

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[1]Arieh Lewy. "The Scope of Education Evaluation -- An Introduction", in Arieh Lewy and David Nevo (editors) **Evaluation Roles in Education.** London: Gordon and Breach, 1981, pp. 1 - 8.

**Political Evaluations.**

Those responsible for the broad direction of society want education to further **their** vision of social, political and even international relationships, and laws are often passed to provide the necessary guidelines. Transgression of these politically identified goals, or even failure to promote them effectively, may be sufficient reason to judge any educational project a failure. Becauses "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" was an international curriculum development project, this first test was given a great deal of attention.

**Canadian Perspective.** Latin America has not traditionally received Canadian international development assistance because the **need** is much greater in Africa or southern Asia[e]. Colombia, Peru and Venezuela were selected by the principal investigators as targets for this project on the basis **their** interests. These could be justified by prospects of success, including the existing national governments' stated allegiance to democratic principles and substantial progress in achieving their educational and political goals aimed at producing democratic societies. The Canadian authorities agreed that these three nations were eligible to participate in a program funded by

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[e] The average levels of income, nutrition, life expectancy, education and similar indicators of prosperity place most of Africa and Asia well behind Latin America, and behind even the poorest of the nations of this project. Canadian International Development Agency. 1984-1985 **Annual Report**. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1985.

Canada. However, the comparative wealth of Venezuela did pose a policy difficulty, for Canadian priorities required that available financial assistance be directed to those nations most in need.

**Latin American Perspective.** Political support from the nations involved was relatively predictable because all were committed in principle to the **Convenio Andres Bello** (a treaty for cultural cooperation that included among its many objectives the development of common school objectives and programs). "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" began its work by examining the political requirements of this treaty and subsequent statements concerning its implementation, and a detailed examination of the existing school materials and objectives. By taking these political statements into account from the earliest stages of the process, the project was able to avoid obvious transgressions. Despite changes of government in Peru and Colombia during the first three years of the project, there seemed to be no particular problem. Authorities from the new governments evinced interest and support comparable with that of their outgoing counterparts.

Political evaluations (biases) were also present at the personal level. All members of the development teams had personal views, and those they attracted to the project often shared them. In Latin America, one of the most widely endorsed political

perspectives is that of education (or theology) of liberation, in which improving the oppressed condition of the poor is considered to be a priority in policy choices[3]. Although most people justify this compassion by the teachings of Christ rather than Marxism, both Marxism and conventional liberalism have substantial followings in Latin America. However, orthodox or conservative catholicism rejects both the theology of liberation and Marxism and sometimes equates liberal reforms with these sources.

Although "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" leaned toward the theology of liberation, its publications avoided statements that would be offensive to those holding other biases. From the beginning, the project recognized the importance of providing some diversity within the curriculum, of promoting harmony rather than imposing conformity, and of involving teachers and even pupils in the quest for justice in terms of their community needs.

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[3]Puebla Conclusions. **Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin America.** New York: St. Paul Publications, 1980. See also Martin Carnoy. **Education and Cultural Imperialism.** New York: David McKay Company 1974; Paulo Freire, **Pedagogy of the Oppressed,** New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1968; Paulo Freire. **Education for Critical Consciousness. London:** Steed and Ward, 1973; and Medellin Conclusions: Volume II: **The Church in the Present Day Transformation of Latin America.** Bogota: General Secretariate of CELAM. 1970.

**Institutional Approval.**

Since almost all of the persons involved in this project are employed by public or Roman Catholic educational authorities rather than in private schools, their activities are subject to general supervision. Their supervisors decide (1) whether a particular external activity is an appropriate use of time by employees; (2) if extra funds or supports services will be allocated to the project; and (3) if the name and prestige of the institution could be associated with the enterprise. Initially such decisions are made on the basis of the reputations of the persons associated with the project and on its apparent feasibility. Later decisions are made on more evidence about the procedures and even the products of the project. Figure 1 indicates the institutions where such decisions were made, the degree of support or commitment provided, and the stage of the project when that crucial decision was made.

There was a significant risk for those officials who made early decisions to support the project with substantial resources. None of them had money to waste: all of them faced many legitimate requests for more than their available resources.

Figure 1 INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSEMENT OF PLANNED CURRICULUM REFORM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CODECAL | 2 years before funding | Funding of proposal development |
| University of Western Ontario | 1 year before funding | Development and funding of proposal, offer of major contribution to contract, if funded |
| Canadian International Development Agency | **major funding granted** | University of Western Ontario named as contractor |
| McGill | first year | Allocation of staff and support services |
| Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru | first year | Allocation of staff and resources<br>Inclusion of project in university program |
| Madre Admirable School in Lima | second year | Significant involvement of staff, students and parents |
| La Universidad Pedagogica Nacional del Colombia | second year | Allocation of staff and resources, inclusion of project in schools supervised |
| Various schools Colommbia, Peru and Venezuela | | Allocation of staff and resources, inclusion of project in curriculum and professional development schedule |

The decision to give "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" priority over other projects was made almost entirely on (1) the basis of their assessment of the potential importance to national and international education, and (2) confidence in the competence of the team of persons identified with the project. The early commitments of the University of Western Ontario and La Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru were of critical importance, for the Deans of these institutions had special knowledge of the work of the directors and national team leaders, so their endorsements were critical in winning the acceptance of others with no similar reasons for confidence.

**Procedural Competence.**

Very few projects are undertaken without being able to draw upon earlier experience -- including the problems that have been encountered by others. This project included straightforward curriculum development, undertaken in three nations with many common elements in their educational, cultural, and political situations[4].

Because the Latin Americans were encouraged to make all the crucial decisions as an important step toward self-reliance, the presense of Canadians was not resented as imperialism (but that possibility was raised in many discussions). Self-reliance was

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[4]Junta del Ocuerdo de Cartagena. **Sistema Andino de Integracion, 1969 - 1984.** Lima: Departamento de Comunicaciones e Informacion, 1985.

early demonstrated by the professional and very thorough way in which the team reviewed previous curriculum development projects, identified the shortcomings of the existing curricula[5], incorporated the recommendations of experts from various other nations in similar situations (including the numerous suggestions from UNESCO[6]) and solicited the practical advice from teachers in daily contact with the community and the children.

Personal commitment was reflected in career plans also. Some members of the project were young and hoped that successful performance in this project would help their careers. Older, respected professionals helped to satisfy authorities that the team knew precisely what to do, and their commitment reflected their determination to remain associated with the progressive edge in their nation's educational development.

Although fine-tuned from time to time, initial procedures were substantially retained throughout the project. This stability of personnel and procedures and use of well established methods helped to win and maintain the confidence of cautious administrators and influential scholars in sponsoring

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[5]Rodolfo de Roux. **La Integracion y la Cooperacion en Los Paises Latinoamericanos: Analysis del curriculo y Recommendaciones de unidadas para la accion educativa en los Paises del Convenio Andres Bello.** Bogota, Colombia: CODECAL, 1983.

[6] Arief Lewy (editor). **Handbook of Curriculum Evalauation,** Paris: UNESCO, 1977.

institutions during the long gestation period of the new curricula. There were to be no surprises.

Authorities were protected because they could delay their final decisions about whether the curricula developments would ever be used, and if so where. Instead of having to commit themselves in advance to use a radical curriculum, they could permit it to be developed by a project which had no official commission, and then evaluate the outcome in various ways before making their crucial decision about potential implementation. If they had been required to make an earlier commitment to **implement** the product, it is fairly certain that the authorities would have been more cautious, more stringent in their assessments, more prone to political control (as opposed to professional participation) in the project. Since the process of curriculum development and the related teacher **capacitacion** would necessarily extend over several years, it was quite likely that there would be changes in the governments and in the persons of The Ministry. Early commitments by authorities might not have been honored by their successors.

**Participant Assessments.**

One impressive participant appraisal came at the very beginning of the project and has been continually reaffirmed. Because the original contract from the Canadian International Development Agency did not provide resources sufficient for three nations,

and because the official guidelines required that a preference be given to the poorer Peru and Colombia, the Venezuelan team began their participation as observers. However, they rapidly made it clear that they would prefer to participate more fully -- even without financial support. They proved to be even more generous than this initial promise, for they contributed as equal partners during a period when declining oil revenues made conditions in the public sector of Venezuela very tough. Although their methods of work were modified to reduce the costs of personnel, materials, communication, and travel; the quality of their curricular materials remained consistently impressive.

In all of the nations involved, key project team members made substantial personal sacrifices to ensure that project work was well done: they refused higher paying jobs, worked massive amounts of overtime, spent their own money for essential things like transportation, typing, photocopying. . . all despite the privations imposed by the decline of professional salaries because of inflation in Latin America. Similarly, various teachers refused available promotions and advantageous transfers because they wished to remain with the project. Persons whose institutional contact with the project was somehow broken managed to restore the contact at a personal level. Although the project was able to repay some of these personal contributions, the fact that they were made **voluntarily, unstintingly,** and **immediately**

provides a dramatic assessment of the commitment of participants.

A third immportant indication of confidence is that the institutions and persons involved have remained fairly constant, significantly more so than would be expected in the comparatively volatile situation of education in Latin America.

University students and professors are excited about the prospects that the project holds for teacher education. In particular, they are aware that in Peru there have been significant numbers of students involved in writing, classroom testing, revising, and polishing the units. There are now prospects of similar program adjustments at La Universidad Pedagogica Nacional in Colombia.

International authorities who have examined the materials and discussed the work with teachers involved have given several positive appraisals. The UNESCO Regional Office in Quito plans to publish several of the materials as models for curricular and professional development. The secretariate for the Convenio de Cartagena has indicated that all the members of the pact should be involved as soon as possible. Individual scholars from Ecuador have participated in a personal capacity to indicate that they are interested and would like their nation to be involved as much as possible.

**Internal Assessments.**

As the materials and methods of "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" are examined for their technical quality, priority is given to certain themes:

(1) the scholarly validity of school materials (as appraised by experts of the discipline rather than by persons with political interests, and by test and examination results);

(2) the apparent effectiveness of the materials and methods for teaching in the intended way; and

(3) the efficiency of the process used in development.

**Scholarly Validity.** This curriculum project employed an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of history, civic education, and environmental studies. The diversified inputs contributed to the testing of objectives and data, but the subsequent appraisal of the curriculum widened the scope of potential challenges.[7] Since three nations were to use the materials developed, theoretically the content would be scrutinized from nine perspectives, by experts from the three background disciplines for each of the three nations. These types of feedback were planned from the beginning.

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[7] This goal was stressed by R. Freeman Butts, "International Human Rights and Civic Education" in Margaret Stimman Branson and Judith Torney-Purta (editors). **International Human Rights, Society and the Schools.** Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1982, pp. 23 - 34.

International, professional reviews of all of the materials are intended to ensure that inappropriate comments are removed for the units, and that every lesson deals with ideas in a way that is both positive and scholarly. This combination of international and interdisciplinary double checking reflects the recommendations of the International Schoolbook Institute in Brunswig[8]. Although these assessment procedures have been initiated, they are not yet pursued with the desired rigour because there are not sufficient resources (including time) available in the first contract of "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance".

**Pupil Performance.** Throughout Latin America, tests and examinations have traditionally determined the level of scholarly mastery by the children. These normally take two forms: periodic testing of the pupils by their teachers or by the principals, and formal examinations by the national or local authorities at the end of each stage of schooling. This regular employment of tests or examinations is intended to protect society (including the pupils) against the possibility of ineffective teaching or insufficient studying. Such examinations permit a few bright and energetic pupils to have access to education and the social opportunities that are its possible consequence -- despite

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[8]Georg Eckert "International Textbook Revision", in George Z. F. Bereday and Joseph A. Lauwerys (editors). **The Yearbook of Education; Education and International Life.** London: Evans Brothers, 1964.

poverty which mars the chances of many. In the case of classroom testing, the test results may also be used to decide how and what to teach the class or a particular pupil. By contrast, year-end examinations would almost never be used in this formative manner: they determine instead if the student would be allowed to continue in school -- they are summative. The transition from traditional, discipline centered instruction to the interdisciplinary work proposed in this curricula will likely be difficult for many teachers and educational authorities, who will almost certainly make invidious comparisons. Consequently, it will be necessary for the new curriculum to help students do well on the traditional types of examinations.

In fact, a strong case can be made for an examination-based comparison of student achievement in the new and the traditional curricula, either at the time of field-studies or in the first few years following wider implementation. It would also be useful to develop more diversified kinds of evaluation procedures (including sample questions) that might be employed by teachers and school authorities in testing or examination programmes. The objectives should include evaluation of skills and attitudes as well as knowledge. This is particularly vital because the objectives of "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" emphasize **values** that might be reflected in civic observances, social cohesiveness, sensitivity to environmental preservation, and similar behaviour that can be observed. At least in principle,

these can also be measured and compared with the behaviour likely to result when students are taught from a more conventional curriculum[9].

A complication is that interdisciplinary studies cannot readily be compared with single subjects because the content base has been shifted.[10] It will be necessary for teachers and authorities to be satisfied that what is taught is both valid and well learned, and the evidence will have to be presented convincingly.

**Professional Acceptance.** Effectiveness for teaching can be predicted theoretically, but invariably it will be assessed practically -- by the teachers who ultimately implement it. This project has the protection that very experienced and able Latin American curriculum workers were responsible for the initial development of school materials, and they were working closely with schools where their ideas could be given informal trials at an early stage. Further pilot-testing which is both diversified within each nation and international in scope will ensure that the units have been assessed for effectiveness far more

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[9] Arieh Lewy (editor) **Handbook of Curriculum Evaluation.** Paris: UNESCO, 1977, p. 48.

[10] These complications proved to be formidable during the International Educational Achievement studies. See J.V. Torney, A.N.Oppenheim and R.F.Farnen. **Civic Education in Ten Countries: An Empirical Study.** New York: Wiley, 1975.

effectively than is typically the case[11]. In fact, these tests are almost dauntingly demanding. Units which meet most but not all tests will usually be implemented after modifications but without a repetition of the full testing procedure.

One way to develop school units that will be accepted and used properly by teachers is to involve them in their original design and development. Although this procedure was designed into the project and carried out to the degree possible with the available resources, the creative teachers who participated in the initial design and development of units would have a good chance of using new materials successfully **whatever** their faults.[12] Consequently, pilot-testing all units in a wide variety of schools, including many where problems would be more likely to be identified, was ragarded as necessary before national implementation could be considered[13] . Although this kind of pilot testing and the consequent revision of materials to incorporate the feedback has begun, it will take time and

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[11]See Bathory Zoltan. "The Field Trial Stage of Curriculum Evaluation", in Arieh Lewy (editor) **Handbook of Curriculum Evaluation.** Paris, UNESCO. 1977, PP. 104 - 116.

[12] Michael Fullan and Paul Park. **Curriculum Implementation: A Resource Booklet.** Toronto: Ministry of Education, 1981.

[13]Lewy makes an important distinction between **tryout** and **field-trial** in the development and revision of new curricula. He considers the size and diversity of field-trials to be the chief means of uncovering problems likely to arise when implementation is general. **Ibid.** pp. 104 - 105.

resources beyond those available during the initial contract for the project.

A comparison with the costs of developing curriculum in Canada suggests that a great deal was done in three years for a comparatively small cash investment by the Canadian International Development Agency. On paper, much of this saving came at the expense of Canadians who were paid nothing for their consultation. Although different rates of nominal pay in Latin America make the savings **per person** less dramatic, the project would have come to nothing but for an even greater sacrifice by the Peruvian, Venezuelan and certain Colombian scholars, who similarly donated their expertise. In some cases the donation was courtesy of their institution (for their job description was alterred to make time for the project) and sometimes an honorarium was later paid. In a few cases the contribution was personal and no honorarium was accepted. (See Appendices).

## CONCLUSION

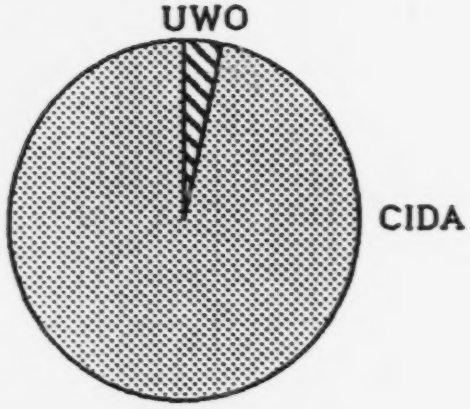
Evaluation was an integral part of management of "Toward Cooperation and Self-Reliance" during the first contract, then for deciding whether the project should be extended, and if so what changes might be made. This sequence of purposes was constrained during the first contract because the substantial contributions from Latin American institutions and individuals made it logical that their voice should dominate in the

management of a project directly affecting only Latin American education. Naturally enough, their own evaluations and consequent choices were differed at various points, but differences never threatened the project.

Despite practical and theoretical limitations, it was possible to add financial, institutional, and personnel resources throughout the project while minimizing the loss of support to a few individuals. Under the circumstances, this was success.

*APPENDIX A*

# Alternate Ways of Presenting Contributions

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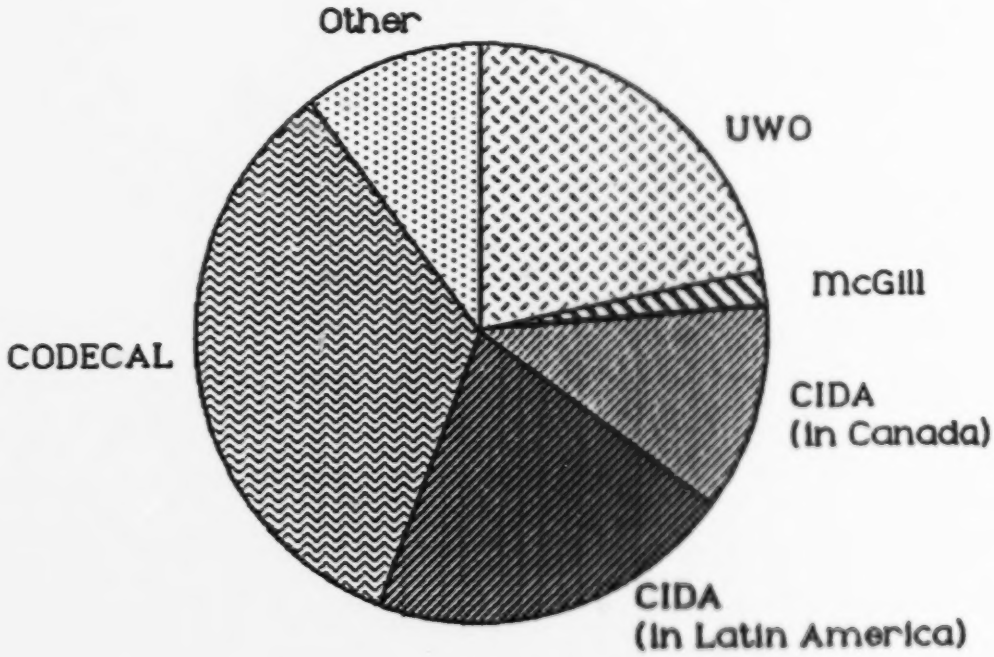
$247 000. Canadian




Cash Equivalent, Including Cash and
In-kind Contributions at Market Rate
$746 000. Canadian

APPENDIX B

## ESTIMATES OF TIME SPENT ON PROJECT

(for which compensation was not automatic)

| | PERSONNEL TIME (DAYS) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CANADIAN | | LATIN AMERICAN | |
| | UWO | McGILL | CODECAL | OTHER L.A. |
| Directors | 200 | | 300 | |
| Assistant(s) | 400 | | | 300 |
| Consultants | 80 | 30 | 1 000 | |
| Technical | | | 200 | |
| Teachers | | | | 1 500 |
| Grad. students | | | | 100 |
| Other students | | | | 200 |
| Benefits | 90 | | | |
| TOTAL | 770 | 30 | 1 500 | 2 100 |
| | 800(18.2%) | | 3 600(81.8%) | |